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# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

April 20, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## FOSTER YOUTH IDENTITY THEFT

This is in response to the March 24, 2009, motion by Supervisor Antonovich related to Foster Youth Identity Theft. The motion instructs the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days and quarterly thereafter, on:

1. The scope of foster youth identity theft in Los Angeles County and the effectiveness of measures taken to address this problem;
2. Whether AB 2985 and subsequent State implementation instructions sufficiently address the problem and allow the disclosure of all types of identity theft affecting our foster youth;
3. The County's plan and resources needed to implement the services required by AB 2985.

## LEGISLATION

Assembly Bill 2985 (AB 2985), authored by Assembly member Maze and co-authored by Assembly Speaker Bass, requires County welfare departments to conduct credit checks on behalf of any foster child who reaches 16 years of age and is in the care of the County. If the credit check discloses any negative items or any evidence that some form of identity theft has occurred, the County welfare department would be required to refer the youth to a credit counseling organization.

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The Bill requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) and other relevant stakeholders, to develop a list of approved credit counseling organizations to which foster youth may be referred. It should be noted that Counties would not be required to conduct more than one credit check on behalf of a youth, nor would they be required to provide assistance beyond referring the youth to a credit counseling agency.

Chartered on February 24, 2006, AB 2985 was scheduled to be implemented by the State effective January 1, 2007. However, due to budget constraints the implementation of the Bill was delayed until Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10. The current statewide budget allocation is \$1.2 million. An all County letter (ACL) is scheduled for release in May 2009. Counties have been instructed by CDSS to refrain from implementing policies regarding AB 2985 until the ACL is released.

## **BACKGROUND**

According to the Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC) in San Diego, half of the 84,000 kids in California's system may have been victims of identity theft at some point in their young lives. Further, the ITRC indicates that statistics reveal a significant percentage of foster children who have aged out of the child welfare system are victims of identity theft. This violation can wreak havoc on a young person working to establish their independence.

Given that children cannot legally obtain credit prior to age 18, they should have a clean credit report prior to that age. If there has been identity theft, there needs to be sufficient time to get the information removed prior to a young adults' need to secure housing, utilities, loans, etc.

There are two notable types of identity theft:

- Financial identity theft – This most commonly occurs when the Social Security Number (SSN) and name are used to establish new lines of credit;
- Criminal identity theft – This typically occurs when a person “borrows” the information of a minor to get a driver's license or uses the child's identity when caught in a criminal act.

Identity theft among children in foster care has been cited as more common than child identity theft in the general population. Although Americans are well-informed regarding identity theft, the emphasis generally centers around protection of one's information and cautionary tips on preventing others from accessing private account codes or identifying information.

With children in foster care, there are a number of reasons why the incidence of identity theft may be higher and the standard prevention mechanisms may not work. Foster youth are transient – moving often among various homes and schools, perhaps over the course of several years; multiple agencies provide services and have access to personal data; and unscrupulous parents, relatives or caregivers (who may have substance abuse issues or police contacts) may use a child's name, SSN and birth records to open up accounts or otherwise misuse the child's identifying information.

Unfortunately, foster youth victims typically find out their identity has been compromised in the same manner as adult victims of identity theft. They may be: (1) denied credit, mortgage, or loan for a vehicle or college tuition; (2) unable to open a bank or checking account; (3) receiving collection notices in the mail or by telephone; (4) denied tenancy, utility, or phone service; (5) denied a driver's license; (6) discharged from a job or continually and inexplicably denied employment; (7) quoted higher than normal insurance rates; (8) receiving bills or credit cards they never requested, perhaps for years; (9) arrested for an activity they never committed; and (10) informed of accumulated tickets or citations on an unknown vehicle.

The process of rectifying these issues may take several months and perhaps longer. It may also be necessary for the young victim to secure the assistance of a legal advocate. If the identity theft involves a parent or relative, the process of clearing the charge may be complicated by the necessity of filing a police report, which youth are typically reluctant to pursue. This highlights the rationale in AB 2985 which mandates not only the credit check, but coordination with local organizations that are able to assist.

#### **LOCAL ACTION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES AND PARTNERS**

DCFS' Youth Development Services Division has convened meetings regarding AB 2985 with County and community-based partners, including the Probation Department. They have also been actively participating in the CDSS workgroup on statewide implementation of the legislation.

DCFS plans to implement the following actions:

- Train Children's Social Workers, Youth Development Services staff, and care providers on identity theft via community partners, to immediately assist youth who have exited care with cleaning up credit and criminal identity theft. Identity theft training must address a corrective action plan for victimized youth, as well as follow-through;

- DCFS has partnered with the County's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), and the private, non-profit organizations of Public Counsel Law Center (PCLC) and The Alliance for Children's Rights (TAFCR) to provide financial literacy training in life skills classes;
- DCFS has partnered with Citi Bank to provide financial literacy training for youth in DCFS housing programs: Transitional Housing Program, Transitional Housing Placement Program, and Transitional Housing Program-Plus;
- DCFS will prepare a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document as a training tool;
- DCFS and Probation have established a partnership with DCA, TAFCR, and PCLC that have an existing partnership with both City and District Attorneys, as well as law enforcement;
- DCFS should explore with County Counsel the feasibility of placing a blanket "security freeze" on all youth who become dependents of the Juvenile Court;
- Conduct live scans on all dependent youth, 16 and older, to detect if they have been victimized by criminal ID theft;
- Collaborate with the Probation Department's Victims Advocate Unit for cross-training of DCFS staff.

TAFCR scheduled a specialized identity theft training to address the scope and extent of identity theft. Community partners and key DCFS staff participated in the April 15, 2009, training.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Jenny Serrano at (213) 974-0801, or via e-mail at [jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:SRH:MS

JS: cvb

Attachments

c: County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Director, Department of Children and Family Services



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

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3/17/09  
52-B  
Status

September 25, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

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DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

**QUARTERLY STATUS OF FOSTER YOUTH IDENTITY THEFT**

This memo on the status of Foster Youth Identity Theft is in response to the March 24, 2009 motion by Supervisor Antonovich. The motion instructs the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days and quarterly thereafter, on:

1. The scope of Foster Youth Identity Theft in Los Angeles County and the effectiveness of measures taken to address this problem;
2. Whether AB 2985 and subsequent State implementation instructions sufficiently address the problem and allow the disclosure of all types of identity theft affecting our foster youth; and
3. The County's plan and resources needed to implement the services required by AB 2985.

Scope of Identity Theft

The number of youth eligible to be served is based on the current Child Welfare Services Fact Sheet. As of July 2009, 5,578 youth between the ages of 16-21 would be eligible to be referred for Identity Theft clearance, or sent information on how to obtain a free credit report as well as referrals for credit counseling if corrective action is necessary.

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The Foster Youth Identity Theft workgroup had previously recommended exploring the possibility of live scanning youth to identify criminal identity theft through a review of any associated records. DCFS has concluded that it would not be in the youth's best interest to be live scanned. Future background checks for employment, housing or loan purposes may indicate a "hit", that the youth was investigated for a possible child protection issue. As an alternative to live scanning, a Juvenile Automated Index (JAI) Clearance on youth over the age of 14 should suffice. The JAI search will disclose criminal records (for criminal identity theft review) and it is in accordance with Procedural Guide 0070-563.10 JAI Clearance.

#### AB 2985 and AB 1324

AB 2985 is comprehensive in addressing foster youth identity theft. Further, funds have been allocated for the implementation of the bill this Fiscal Year. However, County-supported AB 1324 amends AB 2985, making technical changes by deleting the reference to an "approved counseling" organization, and instead, inserting "a governmental or nonprofit organization" that provides "information and assistance" to victims of identity theft.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the Child Welfare Directors Association are working with the California Office of Privacy Protection (COPP) to develop the All County Letter (ACL) regarding implementation of AB 2985 and AB 1324. The COPP has been working cooperatively with the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the three major credit reporting bureaus. The ACL will incorporate "Best Practices" and is scheduled for release following evaluation of a pilot project, which will be discussed in the next section.

#### County Plan to Implement

The staff from the Chief Executive Office, DCFS and Probation have been actively involved in workgroups at the State level regarding implementation of Foster Youth Identity Theft policy and practice. The DCFS/Probation Youth Development Services Division (YDSD) has volunteered to pilot a local program to test AB 2985 and AB 1324.

The pilot program is funded with Independent Living Program dollars, overseen by DCFS/Probation YDSD and scheduled to operate for 6-12 months. It currently consists of four cases involving six foster youth referred by minute orders from Juvenile Court Services. The intent of the pilot is to process and assist 100 foster youth referrals for Identity Theft clearance. Development of Identity Theft protocols is underway and will be followed up with informational sessions on departmentwide implementation of AB 2985 and AB 1324.

Each Supervisor  
September 25, 2009  
Page 3

DCFS and Probation have partnered with DCA in the Casey Family Programs Breakthrough Series for Independent Living Program Redesign. DCA has assigned a Supervising Investigator from the Identity Theft Unit to work closely with DCFS and Probation. DCFS and Probation staff received training from: Citi Bank (April 2009), First City Savings Federal Credit Union (June 2009), and DCA (July 2009). DCFS staff and several foster youth attended the CDSS Teen Forum (June 2009) at UC Davis, where COPP conducted a presentation regarding Foster Youth Identity Theft to an audience of over 200 youth.

It should be noted that direction from CDSS to Counties remains the same. Individual child welfare agencies are not yet allowed to work with the three major credit reporting bureaus or make referrals for credit counseling to non-approved public or community-based organizations, pending the release of the ACL.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Jenny Serrano at (213) 974-0801, or via e-mail at [jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF: JW  
JS:ljp

c: Department of Children and Family Services  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Probation Department

foster youth.bm





## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

January 5, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: *for* William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

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### QUARTERLY STATUS OF FOSTER YOUTH IDENTITY THEFT

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1. The scope of foster youth identity theft in Los Angeles County and the effectiveness of measures taken to address this problem;
2. Whether AB 2985 and subsequent State implementation instructions sufficiently address the problem and allow the disclosure of all types of identity theft affecting our foster youth; and
3. The County's plan and resources needed to implement the services required by AB 2985.

This update will focus on the status of the pending All County Letter (ACL), AB 1324 (Bass), and the Identity Theft Protocol, which is in development for the local pilot.

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### **All County Letter**

The ACL from the California Department of Social Services has not yet been finalized or released.

### **AB 1324**

AB 1324, which would have amended AB 2985 to allow governmental or nonprofit organizations to assist foster youth in remediating identity theft, was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 12, 2009. Governor Schwarzenegger's statement indicated that AB 2985 was signed in 2006 and has not yet been fully implemented because of the State's fiscal challenges. He further stated that since the current program is not yet fully operational, AB 1324 is premature and may have the unintended consequence of shifting county workload to the State.

### **Identity Theft Protocol for the Pilot**

The Department of Children and Family Services and Probation Youth Development Services Division (YDS) have been working closely with the California Office of Privacy Protection, the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs, and representatives from the three credit reporting agencies – Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion to develop a protocol for the pilot (Attachment).

A Blanket Order developed with County Counsel, allowing credit reporting agencies to process credit checks on behalf of dependent youth is in the final stages of approval. The Blanket Order will be reviewed by the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers prior to submission for approval to the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash.

Secure data transfer of information on behalf of eligible minors between the ages of 16 and 18 to the credit reporting bureaus is being developed. Three designated Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) sites will be established. The SFTP is a network protocol that provides file access, file transfer, and file management functionality to reliable data streams.

The credit reporting agencies have been very involved and committed. All three agencies have agreed to take action and immediately notify the designated remediation organizations and YDS when identity theft is suspected and/or detected. Once the youth's credit has been cleared, the credit reporting agencies will freeze their credit record until the youth has had jurisdiction terminated. Discussion of law enforcement notification responsibility and the process for notifying credit bureaus of terminated

Each Supervisor  
January 5, 2010  
Page 3

jurisdiction are ongoing. YDS will continue to direct foster youth age 18 and older to AnnualCreditReport.com, the only authorized federal source for obtaining free annual credit reports, to check the status of their credit. YDS staff have been designated as the departmentwide contact and will assist youth with securing their credit reports.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Jenny Serrano at (213) 974-4171, or via e-mail at [jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:jserrano@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:JW:KH  
JS:hn

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Acting County Counsel  
Department of Children and Family Services  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Probation Department

Quarterly Status of Foster Youth Identity Theft\_Board Memo

**Protocol for Pilot Test of Foster Youth Identity Theft Remediation Program  
L.A. County, November 2009**

1. Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) sends list of 15-25 foster youth with related data to three nationwide credit reporting agencies (CRAs) – Equifax, Experian, TransUnion.
  - a. Data to be provided for each child:
    - i. Full name
    - ii. Social Security number
    - iii. Current address
    - iv. Previous addresses
    - v. Birth date
    - vi. County point of contact name and contact information
    - vii. Social worker name and contact information
    - viii. County case number
    - ix. Contact information for appropriate remediation agency (either L.A. County Department of Consumer Affairs [DCA] or California Office of Privacy Protection [COPP]).<sup>1</sup>
  - b. DCFS post the list on the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) web site for each of the three CRAs.
    - i. According to the procedures for posting, as developed by the CRAs and L.A. County.
    - ii. After posting the list, DCFS will send emails to designated contacts at the CRAs, informing them that the list has been posted.
2. CRAs check information in list against their data bases, to determine whether a credit record exists for each identity.
  - a. CRAs mark on list provided indicating whether or not a record was found for each identity.
  - b. CRAs post the marked list on the same SFTP web sites and send emails to DCFS designee indicating that list is available.
  - c. CRAs send credit reports found to the designated remediation agency, through the same SFTP procedure, notifying the agency by email that the reports are available.

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<sup>1</sup> For this pilot test, half the names will be assigned to DCA as the remediation agency and half to COPP. For the full implementation of the program, all L.A. County youth will be assigned to DCA for remediation. COPP will be handling other counties.

3. Remediation agencies (DCA and COPP) review the reports, contact CRAs, creditors and others as necessary to resolve problems and clear up erroneous or identity-theft-related issues.
  - a. Once remediation agency has confirmed final clearance with CRAs, CRAs will suppress the identity of the former identity theft victim in their records. This means that no further information can attach to the identity until the youth reaches adulthood (18).<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Remediation agencies will inform DCFS when each youth's file has been cleared and identity suppressed in the CRA files.
  - c. Remediation agencies will provide DCFS with credit reports and related correspondence for inclusion in youth's file, to be provided to the youth as appropriate upon emancipation.
  - d. Remediation agencies will provide DCFS with agreed-upon aggregate data about foster youth identity theft among their population and statewide (quarterly or annually).

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<sup>2</sup> Educational materials will be provided by DCA and COPP for use in ILP programs, to prepare youth at emancipation to check their credit reports regularly. The materials will also cover preventing and clearing up identity theft.





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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

April 19, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. T. Fujioka", written over a horizontal line.

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

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## QUARTERLY STATUS OF FOSTER YOUTH IDENTITY THEFT

This is in response to the March 24, 2009 motion by Supervisor Antonovich, instructing the Chief Executive Office (CEO), the Director of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Chief Probation Officer to report back to your Board within 30 days and quarterly thereafter, on:

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2. Whether AB 2985 and subsequent State implementation instructions sufficiently address the problem and allow the disclosure of all types of identity theft affecting our foster youth; and
3. The County's plan and resources needed to implement the services required by AB 2985.

This update will focus on the status of AB 2698, as well as the status of the local pilot.

### **AB 2698**

County-supported AB 2698, introduced by Assembly Member Block on February 19, 2010, would authorize county welfare departments or the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to release information to credit agencies on behalf of foster youth who may be the victims of identity theft.

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Under current law, the county welfare department is required to request a credit report on behalf of foster youth 16 years of age. If the report indicates that some form of identity theft may have occurred, the county welfare department is required to refer the foster youth to an agency that provides services to victims of identity theft.

AB 2698 would strengthen the procedures for requesting credit reports and handling suspected identity theft of foster youth as follows:

- Authorize the county welfare department or CDSS to request a credit report from three national credit reporting agencies in the year that a foster youth reaches 16 years of age;
- Authorize the county welfare department or CDSS, acting on behalf of the foster youth, to refer matters of suspected identity theft to an authorized governmental agency, such as consumer affairs, or a nonprofit organization that provides information and assistance to victims of identity theft;
- Authorize the agency or nonprofit organization to take remedial action on behalf of the foster youth to clear his or her credit record and to report the results of the action to the referring county or State department; and
- Require the California Office of Privacy Protection (COPP), in consultation with CDSS, the County Welfare Directors Association, consumer credit reporting agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to develop a list of agencies and organizations to which the matter may be referred for assistance in responding to suspected identity theft.

AB 2698 is very similar to County-supported AB 1324, which the Governor vetoed in October 2009.

### **County Plan to Implement**

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), COPP, DCFS and the three credit reporting agencies – Experian, Equifax and Trans Union, are the agencies involved with the Los Angeles County Pilot Project (Pilot). The Pilot is scheduled to run a system test in April 2010. This test will transmit 100 identities of select foster youth to Experian's Secure File Transfer Protocol site for purposes of a credit check and report back. The involved parties have developed a protocol which contains data fields that will allow for a successful credit check and report on findings for follow-up by DCFS and the remediation agencies. The remediation agencies are COPP and DCA.

Each Supervisor  
April 19, 2010  
Page 3

At this time, DCFS's Business Information Systems Division is working with the Internal Services Department and the Chief Information Office's Information Security Division to approve the purchase of Tectia Corporation-SSH Communications Security Corporation-Client software that will encrypt the transport of Client/County data from DCFS to Experian. The software is Experian's requirement to proceed with the transfer of sensitive client data. After the successful launch of the Pilot, agencies will submit quarterly "bulk" requests for checks on 16 year-olds in foster care. If fraud is detected, the remediation agencies will freeze the youth's credit. When the youth's credit is cleared, the freeze will automatically be lifted/removed.

The Department of Children and Family Services with the assistance of County Counsel, was able to secure a Blanket Order (Attachment) signed by the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, allowing a credit check for foster youth at age 16 for the purpose of detecting and resolving identity theft by approved agencies.

The Department of Children and Family Services will continue to direct foster youth age 18 and older to AnnualCreditReport.com, the only authorized source to obtain free annual credit reports under federal law, for the purpose of reviewing the status of their credit. The DCFS/Probation Youth Development Services Division's Independent Living Coordinators have been designated as the Departmentwide contacts to address identity theft and assist youth with obtaining their credit report.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at [khhouse@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:khhouse@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:KH:LB  
JS:hn

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Children and Family Services  
Probation

Foster Youth Identity Theft Update\_Board Memo\_April 2010

**FILED**  
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT

Feb 05 2010

JOHN A. CLARKE, CLERK

BY S. HERNANDEZ, DEPUTY

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
JUVENILE COURT

On behalf of:

Los Angeles County Department of Children  
and Family Service,

BLANKET ORDER RE: CREDIT CHECKS  
PURSUANT TO WIC 10618.6

Petitioner

Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 10618.6, when a youth in a foster care placement reaches his or her 16th birthday, the county welfare department shall obtain a consumer disclosure (known commonly as a "credit check"), pursuant to the free annual disclosure provision of the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, on the youth's behalf, notwithstanding any other provision of law, to ascertain whether or not identity theft has occurred.

If the consumer disclosure indicates that identity theft might have occurred, the Department of Children and Family Services shall ensure that consumer disclosures regarding the youth be provided to an approved agency to resolve any indications of identity theft in the disclosures.

To protect the foster youth's confidential information, credit information shall not be shared with anyone other than the youth, the social worker requesting the information, the supervising social worker, minor's counsel, the Court and any agency authorized to assist foster youth with addressing credit problems. At no time shall credit information be shared with anyone not listed above. At the request of minor's counsel, the Court may make an order permitting any other adult access to credit information if the Court finds such person to be actively involved with helping the youth repair any credit problems identified by the credit check performed in

BLANKET ORDER RE: CREDIT CHECKS PURSUANT TO WIC 10618.6

1 compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 10618.6.

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3 IT IS SO ORDERED.

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5 DATED:

2/5/10

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MICHAEL NASH

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Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

July 16, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

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This update will focus on the status of AB 2698 as well as the status of the local pilot.

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County-supported AB 2698 (Block), introduced on February 19, 2010, would authorize county welfare departments or the California Department of Social Services to release information to credit agencies on behalf of foster youth who may be the victims of identity theft. AB 2698 is very similar to County-supported AB 1324 (Bass) which the

Governor vetoed in October 2009. As of this writing, AB 2698 has passed the Assembly Human Services Committee, Assembly Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Floor, with no opposition. Further, it passed the Senate Human Services Committee with no opposition. It is scheduled for a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on August 2, 2010.

### **County Plan to Implement**

The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the California Office of Privacy Protection (COPP), DCFS and the three credit reporting agencies – Experian, Equifax and Trans Union, are the agencies involved with the Los Angeles County Pilot Project (Pilot).

On May 11, 2010, DCFS' Business Information Systems Division, the Internal Services Department and the Chief Information Office's Information Security Division purchased and installed the required software used to encrypt the transport of sensitive client data from DCFS to Experian.

The plan for the Pilot is for DCFS to transmit the records to the credit bureau, have the credit bureau run the credit check and refer any possible fraud records to DCA and/or COPP for follow-up and remediation as determined necessary and lastly, run the records through the other credit bureaus – Trans Union and Equifax. Once the pilot test has been completed, partners will evaluate the process and revise as appropriate. It is envisioned that records will be transmitted on a quarterly basis.

On May 18, 2010, DCFS transferred 2,110 youth data files to Experian's Secure File Transfer Protocol site for purposes of a credit check and report back. The involved parties have developed a protocol which contains data fields that will allow for a successful credit check and report on findings for follow-up by the remediation agencies – COPP and DCA.

Of the 2,110 records, 200 have been referred to the remediation agencies for follow-up on possible fraud. It should be noted that not all of the records will be the result of identity theft. Preliminary observations of the records yielded the following patterns:

- Library fines in collection;
- Medical debts in collection;
- Child Support accounts in collection; and
- Cell phone and credit card accounts in collection.

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The remediation agencies are now sending the first batch of letters out to collectors and creditors and are reviewing records for possible errors. The agencies will follow up with phone calls and additional letters as necessary.

In conclusion, the Pilot is moving forward and will certainly produce useful information about the handling of identity theft among foster youth. The initial results of the Pilot show that the County's protocol is in place for transferring youth data files to allow for a successful credit check. Moreover, the procedures fulfill the AB 2985 requirement for the county welfare department to refer youth to an approved organization that provides services to victims of identity theft. As a result, these quarterly updates have addressed the foster youth identity theft issues outlined in the March 24, 2009 Board motion. Therefore, this report concludes such updates unless otherwise directed by your Board.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at [khous@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:khous@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:BC:KH  
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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Chief Information Office  
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